THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The scheme for purchase of reserved rail tickets through mobile phones has been launched through Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC).

(b) Booking of tickets through mobile phone is offered in the following Telecom circles by selected operators:—

Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh (East & West) and West Bengal.

While ticket can be booked from the above telecom circles, the delivery of tickets is done in 139 cities.

(c) to (e) The extension of the facility would depend upon the reach and the number of telecom service providers offering the facility of mobile phone booking.

Container traffic business

603. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have contemplated private players in container traffic business;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the advantages envisaged by entrusting the container business to private players;

(d) whether it would lead to retrenchment in railways; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes sir.

(b) and (c) In order to meet the growing demand for container trains, it has been decided that organisations other than Container Corporation of India will also be considered for movement of container traffic.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) does not arise.

Separating Bhilai Steel Plant from SAIL

†604. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government have received any proposal from Chhattisgarh Government for separating Bhilai Steel Plant in Chhattisgarh from Steel Authority of India Limited;

(b) if so, the decision taken in this regard; and

(c) if not, by when the same would be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal was not acceptable.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

SAIL's status

605. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) could not succeed, so far, to recover its sound financial health and is incurring heavy losses, despite Government's monetary help;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of financial help given, so far, by Government for restructuring Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) since February, 2000; and

(d) the present status of SAIL and the steps proposed to be taken in this respect?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.